

FILLING UP THE MEASURE OF INIQUITY

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*“The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.”
Genesis 15:16*

THE Amorites had indulged in the most degrading sin. God had observed this, but He did not at once execute vengeance upon them. He had determined that, as a nation, they should be destroyed and rooted out from under heaven, and that their land should be given to the seed of Abraham. But He tells Abraham that his seed must wait for it, for as yet the Amorites had not filled up the measure of their iniquity.

It would take four hundred years and more, during which time God's patience would wait while these Amorites continued to heap sin upon sin, iniquity upon iniquity, until they reached a certain point—and then God would bear with them no longer. When the Lord uttered the words of our text, the Amorites had not come up to that fatal point and therefore He did not at once mete out their punishment to them, for the measure of their iniquity was not yet full.

It is a well-known truth that God has great long-suffering, but that there is a point beyond which even His longsuffering will not go. It has been so in the great judgments of God in the world. Before the days of Noah, men had revolted from God, but Noah was sent to them as a preacher of righteousness, and he did preach, and the Spirit of God was with him.

Yet, for all that, the antediluvian world turned not from its sin and when the one hundred and twenty years had expired—but not till then—God opened the windows of heaven and down came the deluge which destroyed the whole race with the exception of the eight souls who were preserved in the ark. [See sermon #3042, The Parable of the Ark]

Those old-world sinners had had one hundred and twenty years for repentance, and one hundred and twenty years of earnest, faithful warning from holy Noah—and not till all those year's had expired did God's patience come to an end and His judgments begin.

Remember also the case of the children of Israel in the wilderness. They were a rebellious people—constantly revolting, often murmuring—at one time setting up a golden calf in the place of the one living and true God, yet the Lord had long patience with them. His anger did sometimes wax hot against them, but Moses came in between them as a mediator, and God postponed the punishment of His wayward people. But at last it seemed as though He could bear with them no longer, so He swore in His wrath, “They shall not enter into my rest”—and their carcasses fell in the wilderness till the track of Israel through the desert could be marked by the graves of the unbelieving nation—and there were funerals every day.

It was this sad fact that caused Moses so mournfully to sing, in the ninetieth Psalm, “Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, O LORD, how long? and let it

repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.” Not a man of all that generation, save only Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, was permitted to enter the promised land.

You will also at once call to mind the history of the two nations of Israel and Judah in later years. They provoked the Lord exceedingly and their land was therefore invaded by their enemies—and many of the people and their rulers were carried into captivity. But God did not cast off His people, nor expatriate them from their highly-favored land till, by degrees, they had reached the climax of rebellion and idolatry, and then He delivered the chosen nations into the hands of their cruel adversaries.

Israel was swept clean as a man’s threshing floor when he has purged it. And as for the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, they ceased to dwell by the vine-covered hills of their own dear land, for they were carried away into captivity by the rivers of Babylon, where they wept when they remembered Zion. God is indeed long-suffering, but there is an end even to His long-suffering.

The Jews in our Lord’s day, and especially the scribes and Pharisees, were so obstinate and perverse that, at last, our Savior said to them, “Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.” He had borne long with them, and He still pleaded with them, and wept over them—but at last, the nation, as a nation, was given up to blindness and hardness of heart, the beautiful city of Jerusalem was destroyed, and not one stone of the temple was left upon another.

I might, if it were necessary, say that a similar experience has befallen all the great nations of the earth, for all of them have been greatly sinful. The crimes of the Assyrian king and people brought that mighty empire to an inglorious end. Babylon sank, not so much beneath the power of the Medes and Persians as beneath the sins of Belshazzar and his blasphemous princes and lords and ladies.

And the Persian Empire, in its turn, passed not away because of Alexander’s valor so much as because the Medes and Persians were corrupt in the sight of the Lord. So was it with Greece—her idolatries and her filthinesses brought upon her the ruin which makes her at once the admiration of all lands for her artistic beauty and the detestation of all lands for her festering corruption and iniquity.

As for the Roman Empire—who that reads the history of her rise and fall but knows that, long before the city of Rome began to crumble and decay, her virtue had departed, her ancient valor had declined, licentiousness had reached an awful pitch—and then the Word of the Lord went forth that the iniquitous empire should be swept away?

I might give modern instances of the working of the same law, but I shall not. Certain is it that God has long patience with the various nations and tribes of men that keep on sinning against Him, but at last, He utters that mysterious prophetic sentence (Isa 34:5), “My sword shall be bathed in heaven.” And then, woe be unto the men or the nations whom He smites, “for it is the day of the LORD’S vengeance, and the year of recompense for the controversy of Zion.”

When we speak of this great law of God as it operates on a large scale among nations, many will admit the truth of it, but they are not so willing to admit the truth of it so far as it concerns themselves. I intend, therefore, to confine myself, in this discourse, to the great principle of my text as it can be applied to individuals.

There is a fullness of the iniquity of every sinner in these days, just as there was a fullness of the iniquity of the Amorites in ancient times. And I will try to prove to you, first, that *there is a time when the measure of a sinner’s iniquity is not yet full*. Secondly, *that the measure of his iniquity is constantly being filled*. And thirdly, *that the measure will soon be full*. And I want you all solemnly and seriously to consider the question—*What will happen then?*

I. First, then, THERE IS A TIME WHEN THE MEASURE OF A SINNER’S INIQUITY IS NOT YET FULL.

There is a measure for all iniquity and every iniquity is put into that measure. Flatter not yourself, sinner, with the false and foolish notion that your sin is forgotten. You may possibly forget it, but God never forgets. You may keep no record of your transgressions, but God’s recording angel does not fail to write in His book of remembrance, and to engrave them as “with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever,” as Job said concerning the preservation of his own words.

All those sins of yours—the sins of your youth and of your manhood—are registered in God’s book. You shut your eyes, and—like the ostrich that has buried his head in the sand and therefore thinks itself secure because it cannot see the danger that threatens it—you delude yourself with the notion that, because you have forgotten your sin, it has ceased to be, but it is not so.

Though you should seek to hide your sins in a cleft among the snow on the top of the Himalayas, JEHOVAH would speedily bring them down from those lofty heights, and though you should attempt to bury them in the depths of the Atlantic, God would bring them up from the lowest ocean bed. Sin is an everlasting thing—unless it is put away by God Himself, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake—no grave in the world can hide it.

No earthly sepulcher can conceal it from the all-seeing eye of JEHOVAH. If buried for a while, there will be a resurrection of sin as well as of sinners—and what a dread procession of sin, iniquity, unrighteousness, and transgression shall slowly march before your newly-awakened eye, O unrepentant and unforgiven sinner, when your iniquities shall rise up in judgment against you to condemn you!

Thus I have reminded you that there is a measure for all iniquity, but happily, *that measure is not yet full*. That was a very remarkable vision that was seen by the prophet Zechariah, “a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah.” And the angel said, “This is wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the Ephah,” so that evidently the measure had not been full. And it is still true that there is a time when a sinner’s measure of iniquity is “not yet full.”

Let me, however, also remind you it is only God’s infinite mercy that permits a sinner to continue to live after he has committed even one sin. There is no reason why, upon the basis of infallible justice, a man should be allowed to sin up to a certain point. A single sin is the transgression of the law of God—it is high treason against “the King eternal, immortal, invisible,” and deserves to be punished. However much or however little we may have sinned, “every transgression and disobedience” ought to receive “a just recompense of reward,” as in the days of which Paul wrote to the Hebrews.

Apart from the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, there is not one sinner living in the whole world who could stand before God. It is not justice, but boundless compassion and infinite pity which put a measure to man’s iniquity and allow him to live on until he has reached that point—for sin is death-worthy, in every case, and in any degree—so says the Word of the Lord.

I must also remark that, when we say that some sinners have not filled their measure of iniquity, *it must not be imagined that the same measure of sin is to be filled up by every sinner*. The measures differ, but when any man has filled his own measure, be it a large one or a small one, then will God come to him in His wrath and punish him in His hot displeasure.

Some great offenders, like Pharaoh and Judas, fill up a huge measure of transgression. Some others, cut off in their earlier days, spend a hot and hasty manhood in sin, and go to their doom before they have committed any notorious offenses against mankind in general. The measures differ in size, but still, in each case, it gets filled sooner or later.

And then, woe, woe, woe unto the man whose measure of iniquity is full! It is through God’s long-suffering that we are able to tell you this solemn truth. I have reminded you already that, if it were not for His longsuffering patience, there would not be such a point for sinners to reach, but their first sin would be the crushing, final, fatal blow from the hand of divine justice. It is God’s longsuffering that gives men space for repentance, that presents to them, under the Gospel dispensation, the proclamations of mercy, that pleads with them to turn from their sins, and to lay hold on eternal life.

Because of this, does anymore here wickedly say that, as his particular measure is not yet full, he may still go on in sin? Ah, my friend, you know not how small your measure may be, nor how soon it may be full. But suppose it is a great measure which is to be filled by you? Then the longer it is in getting filled, the heavier it will be when it is filled, and the more terrible will be your eternal doom. Little comfort can any man ever derive from the fact that he is permitted to live long in sin, for he will have to endure forever the heavier punishment for the greater measure of guilt.

Beware, beware, beware, you who would draw the wrong kind of consolation from the subject we are now considering, for there is no consolation in it for the willfully wicked—but only sorrow, and fear, and trembling of heart. Here we sit or stand together, in this House of Prayer—some of us saved by the

sovereign grace of God and others, sitting side by side with us, only here because the measure of their iniquity is not yet full.

Here is one who is forty years of age, but his measure is not yet full—he shall live another year. Over there is one who is sixty years of age, but his measure of iniquity is not yet full—he shall see yet another decade of years. Yonder is one who is seventy, and even his measure is not yet full, but it soon will be! Ah, and how short is the span of human life even when it is longest. And as I have already said, the heavier the sinner’s measure that takes so long to get filled, the more overwhelming shall be the punishment that shall be meted out to such a sinner in the great day of account.

When I have such a solemn theme as this, my words cannot flow freely from my lips. I wish that I could speak out the inmost emotions of my heart without even using my tongue, for my words fail to convey to you what I feel in the deepest recesses of my being. O impenitent sinner, it is so sad to think that you are only sitting here because the measure of your iniquity is not yet full.

If there were half-a-dozen persons together in a room, and one of them was only there because the hour fixed for his execution had not yet come, I think that you would not take any particular interest in the other five individuals, whoever they might be, but all your thoughts would center upon that one man, of whom you would say to yourself, sadly and sorrowfully, “He has been judged according to the law of the land, the death-sentence has been pronounced upon him, and he is only spared because the clock has not yet struck, and the bell has not yet tolled for him to go out to execution.”

You unbelievers are, according to God’s Word, “condemned already” because you have “not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.” Christians, do you know that such condemned persons are here and have you no heart of compassion for them? Children of God, do you know that some of your own sons and daughters are in this terrible position and yet have you no tears to shed on their account?

O preacher, can you stand here and talk so coldly upon such a theme as this when words of flame would be all too cold to express the horror [See sermon #524, The Saint’s Horror at the Sinner’s Hell] that should fill your soul in view of such an assembly as this? Oh, that we had tenderer hearts! For then should we more deeply pity those poor sinning souls whose iniquity is not yet full.

II. With a heavy heart, I must turn to my second point, which is that, **IN THE CASE OF EVERY UNCONVERTED SINNER, THE MEASURE OF HIS INIQUITY IS CONSTANTLY BEING FILLED.**

Every sin that he commits helps to fill up the measure of his iniquity and there is nothing that he can do without sin being mixed with it. Solomon says that “the ploughing of the wicked is sin.” That is to say, even his common actions, in performing the ordinary avocations of his daily life, bring sin upon him. Solomon also said, “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD,” so that even when he pretends to do that which is right in the case of a Christian, he is still heaping up sin, filling up the measure of his iniquity.

There are some persons who fill up their measure very quickly—wanton, dissolute, depraved sinners, they seem as if they could not heap up iniquity fast enough. They are so greedy that, with both hands they labor to fill up the measure. They run, as Peter says, “to the excess of riot,” with body and with the soul, apparently determined to go post haste to hell. And if anything can be found by which they can quicken their speed to destruction, they seek it out and seem to prize it.

Is it not strange that it should be so? Yet, in London, and I suppose it is the same elsewhere, anyone who walks along the streets for a little while, will soon see evidences of the fact that there are many persons, to whom the usual methods of going to destruction seem to be all too slow. I trust that, if there are any young men here, who are thus rapidly filling up their measure of iniquity, they will stop and think.

My friend, your candle will burn fast enough without your lighting it at both ends. You will ruin yourself fast enough without needing to heap up sin upon sin by becoming a drunkard and a gambler as well as profane and unchaste. O man, why are you so diligent to be your own destroyer?

“Sinner, oh why so thoughtless grown?”

*Why in such dreadful haste to die?
Daring to leap to worlds unknown,
Heedless against thy God to fly.”*

Perhaps *among the sins that fill up a man’s measure very quickly, one of the chief is persecution of God’s people.* A man will bear many insults and even much injury to himself, but if you touch his children, then the color comes into his face and he is swift to avenge the wrong that has been done to them.

So is it in the case of God’s children and their Father. He said to Zion in Babylon, “He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.” If you want to be damned out of hand, become a persecutor of the saints, for that is the quickest way to perdition. When holy Wishart was chained to the stake, he pointed to the cardinal who was gloating over the spectacle, and told him that God’s wrath would shortly fall upon him—and so it came to pass, for God avenges His own elect—and sometimes does it very speedily. The sin of persecuting the church of God is one which, perhaps more than any other, helps to fill up the measure of a sinner’s iniquity.

Another sin of a similar character is that of *attending Gospel ordinances and yet despising them.* The Lord will deal more leniently with those who are ignorant of the Gospel and have no opportunity of hearing it, than He will deal with you to whom the Gospel has long been familiar as a household word, yet in whom familiarity with it has only bred contempt.

Christ has been knocking at the door of some of your hearts for many years. I can personally bear witness that the message of salvation has come to you in many forms and various ways. I have searched the Word of God with the view of finding the most impressive texts—and I have prayed to God to guide me to subjects which might savingly affect you.

These topics have often affected my own heart while I have been preparing for the pulpit, yet, so far, they have not affected your hearts—or not sufficiently to lead you to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Depend upon it, you sermon-hearers are bringing a curse upon yourselves by despising and refusing the blessing which has so long been made known to you in vain.

God may well say, “I will not always send My servant to preach to those who judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life. Why should I cast my Gospel pearls before such swinish creatures? Why should I continue to call to those who will not heed My voice?” Well may He say, as He did of old, “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.”

It is no small sin to have heard the Gospel and yet to have rejected it. You know how our Savior upbraided the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not—“Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.”

It is another great help in filling up the measure of iniquity *when a man has had serious personal affliction, yet it has not softened, but rather has hardened him.* You, my friend, were laid low a little while ago. Was it a malignant fever, or some other dangerous disease that you had? Your relatives said, “He cannot recover,” and you turned your face to the wall, in the bitterness of your spirit, for you feared that you would die, and you knew that you were unprepared to meet your God.

You were glad enough if somebody would pray with you then. And after a fashion, you shuffled into some sort of prayer of your own and you promised what you would do if the Lord would spare your forfeited life. But where are your good resolutions now? There are some of you, who used to be Sabbath-breakers. And when you were likely to die, you said, “If God will but spare me, the shop shall be closed on His holy day.” Yet you have opened it again though He spared you.

You were a drunkard up to the time of your great illness, but you said, “If God will spare my life, I will never touch the intoxicating cup again.” God did spare your life, yet you are as abject a slave of drink as ever you were, and you have proved yourself to be a liar in the sight of God.

Young man, you got into a sad trouble once, but God, by a very special providential deliverance, helped you out of it, and you then said, “I will walk more guardedly for the future.” Yet you have gone back to the same sin, as the dog turns to his own vomit again, “and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

But God will not waste His pains on you much longer. A husbandman plows his field and if it brings forth no harvest, he may plow it again, but he will not always go on plowing a field that is as barren as a rock. [See sermon #2977, Ploughing a Rock] A gardener may come to a fig tree, and if it bears no fruit, he may prune it, and dig about it, and dung it, but he will not go on doing that year after year—he will at last say, “Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?”

And it must be so with you if you still remain impenitent after all God’s dealings with you. By refusing to heed God’s warning message which came to you in the chamber of affliction, by forgetting the gentle pressure of God’s hand of mercy which raised you up to health and strength again, you are helping to fill up the measure of your iniquity.

And let me further say that—and I know that my words will go home to some here—*when a man has been subject to convictions*—whether those convictions may be set down to an alarmed conscience, or to what I may call the secondary operations of God’s Holy Spirit, I will not say—but when a man has been the subject of convictions *and has stifled them, it greatly adds to the measure of his guilt.*

The other night a young man was in the street and a temptation was set before him—and he knew it to be a temptation. He stood still a while and thought within himself, “I know that this is a wrong thing for me to do. It would break my mother’s heart if she knew that I committed this sin. And as for my father, I should never dare to look him in the face again if he knew that I had done this, and besides, I am an attendant at a place of worship, and know that this is an evil thing—and that it might be my eternal ruin.”

Now, after that young man had weighed the matter, if he had deliberately chosen to commit that sin, there would have been ten times the guilt in it than there might have been in the case of another who was overtaken unawares by sudden temptation and had no time to consider what was the right thing for him to do. In proportion to the violence that a man has to do to himself in order to commit a certain transgression, the measure of his guilt may be estimated.

I believe there are people here, who, on many occasions, have sat and trembled at the Word of the Lord—and have been softened in spirit till they have wept in silence—and sometimes openly. And they have whispered to themselves, “We really will seek the great change. We will cry to God for help that we may repent of sin and believe in Jesus, as the preacher urges us.”

But on those steps outside, they have met with some worldly companion, and while talking with him, all their good resolutions have melted away, and the sinner, who seemed to be impressed, remains a sinner still. The one, who appeared to be awakened a month ago, is now a drunkard. And the conscience that was thought to be getting tender six months ago, is fast becoming as hard as the nether millstone.

These are dreadful facts, but they all go to show that a man may be—even in the house of prayer and under the means of grace—continually filling up the measure of his iniquity. These are terrible truths for me to have to preach, but it is necessary for them to be told. May you all feel the force of them and may God thus drive you to seek shelter in His Son, who died upon the cross of Calvary, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”

III. My third point is that THE MEASURE OF INIQUITY WILL ONE DAY BE FULL.

It will take time to fill it, but it will be filled in due time, and at the rate at which some men go in sinning, they will soon fill up the measure of their transgression. The tares are green, and God will not have them cut down yet, for He lets even the tares ripen. He allows even the poisonous fruit of evil to hang on the tree till it grows mellow and then it drops with its own weight.

But the tares will ripen and the evil fruit will become mellow—and then will their end come. And it will take time for you, sinners, to ripen in sin, but you *will* ripen, and then you will be shaken from the tree and this life shall know you no more.

I want you unconverted ones to *think, for a minute or two, how nearly full your measure probably is even now.* Begin with your early childhood and think over your many acts of willful disobedience and

sin. I cannot trace your whole life, but let me remind you of your early manhood. Is there nothing for you to be ashamed of and nothing for you to repent of there? I am sure that there are some here who cannot think of that period of life without blushing for very shame.

Then think of the later days of your riper manhood. O sirs, what heaps of sin are there! The measure of your iniquity must be nearly full. Do not forget, too, that we are usually very bad judges of our real state in the sight of God. The probability is that the measure of our iniquity is a great deal fuller than we think it is.

I hope none of you were ever bankrupts, but if you ever were insolvent, I expect that, when you actually came to look into your books, you found that you were much more deeply in debt than you ever thought that you were. It is a common thing for men, who are in an unsound state in their business, to fancy that their position is better than a rigid examination proves it to be. And I believe it is so in spiritual things with many of you.

Take care, take care. You suppose that only the bottom of the measure is full as yet, but the recording angel sees that your iniquity is nearly up to the top. It is a very mournful reflection, dear friends, that there may be some here—and that there probably are some here—who have only to commit one more sin to fill up the measure of their iniquity! One more lie and the measure is full! One more lascivious song and it is full! One more act of theft, one more drunken bout, and it is full!

I have known some people come here—and perhaps some such are now here—who have had *delirium tremens*! It is a wonder that they were not cast into hell then—a marvel of mercy that they were spared a little longer. But the next time that happens to you, sir, it may be a delirium that will never have an end. The next time you put that poison cup to your lips, and dare to drink till you are drunken, you will drink yourself into eternal damnation.

O beware, *beware*, BEWARE! It is not merely a man who speaks thus to you—there is a warning voice from heaven which is speaking to some people here through my lips. Stop, sir, for if you take only one step more, you will be plunged in eternal ruin! Do you ask what concern it is of mine whether you are lost or saved? It is just so much my concern that, as I would, if I could, save your temporal life if I saw you in danger, much more would I desire to point out to you the danger of your immortal soul, that you may, by God's infinite grace, be saved from spiritual and everlasting ruin.

All this while, there is one very sad but most true reflection that I must mention to you. It is this—*while the unconverted are ever putting more sin into the measure, it is not in their power to take out anything that is already in the measure.* I can fill the ephah of my transgression, but I cannot empty it, and I cannot even diminish it. Somebody says to me, "Suppose, sir, that I never sin again?" Well, what then? Even if you get no further into debt, that will not pay off the old score.

"Then, sir, what shall we do? Shall we stand here and weep over our sins—will not our tears wash them out?" No, though you shed a Niagara of penitential tears, there is no power in them to blot out a single sin. "But what if we perform many good works?" No, though you could fill an Atlantic with your good works, you would not have washed out the crimson stain of even one of your innumerable transgressions. No, you cannot take one sin out of the measure, though you can keep on putting in sin upon sin upon sin—and so the measure is being filled and it must soon be full.

IV. So I close by asking you—WHAT THEN?

I was reading in the New Testament, the other night, and there were half-a-dozen words that impressed me with peculiar force. I think they are, on the whole, as dreadful as any words that were ever spoken. I may venture to say that even the Scripture itself contains no more terrible words than these which I am about to quote to you, yet they were spoken by the Lord Jesus Himself—the loving, tender, gentle Jesus, who called the little children to Him. They are recorded in the eighth chapter of John's Gospel, the twenty-first verse. And then, as though one thunder-clap must follow another, they are repeated in the twenty-fourth verse. These are the words,—

“Ye shall die in your sins.”

Hear them again—“If ye believe not that I am he, *ye shall die in your sins.*” I heard of a man who died in a ditch, but that is nothing compared with dying in the ditch of your sins! I heard of one who fell down dead in the street, but what is that compared with dying in sin? Some die starved, but that is nothing to dying in sin!

Near my house, the other day, there was one who sat down to eat, and some coals from a fire flew out, and caught her clothes—the people around her tore her clothes from her back, but she was so burnt that she died—but the flames of sin are worse than coals of the fire. “*Ye shall die in your sins.*”

I have no choice as to how or where I shall die except in this one respect—that I may never die in sin, with iniquity, like the fabled poison shirt, killing its unhappy wearer. He tried to tear it off and even tore away his flesh, but the poison burnt into his bones—but it is worse than that to die in sin.

Man, you must die in your sins if you continue to live in them! You cannot escape from the consequences of sin if you keep following in the pursuit of sin. Work, and you shall have your wages—and “the wages of sin is death.” Sow, and you shall reap your harvest—and if you sow to the flesh, you must and shall of the flesh reap corruption. I pray God that none of you may ever know, in your own persons, the full meaning of those awful words of the Savior, “*Ye shall die in your sins.*” If you believe not,—

“YE SHALL DIE IN YOUR SINS.”

But I cannot send you away like this, although yonder clock has struck the usual hour for closing the service. Thank God that no clock has struck to forbid me to proclaim the tidings of mercy as long as men are yet in this world.

I told you that you could not take any sin out of that measure and most truly did I speak, but let me whisper in your ears that *there is One, the ever-blessed Son of God, who can empty it.* He can take the measure of your sin, just as it is, and not merely take out a little, but He can take it all, and put it on His own shoulders, and carry it right away, and hurl it into his own sepulcher where it shall be buried so deep that even the eye of God Himself shall never see it again.

“Oh, would to God,” says one, “that He would do that with my sins!” Sir, He will do it with your sins, now, at this moment, if you believe on Him. “Believe on Him?” asks one, “I believe that He is the Son of God and the Savior of men.” Go further then, and trust Him as your own Savior. Give up your sins, give up your self-reliance, and cast yourself into those dear arms that were outstretched upon the cross that great sinners might be folded in them and find eternal shelter there.

**“There is life for a look at the Crucified One;
There is life at this moment for thee,”—**

if you will but look unto Him. May God’s gracious Spirit enable you to look away from self to His great substitutionary sacrifice, to the full atonement He made, to the utmost ransom that He paid! Close you in with Christ and the measure of your iniquity shall be emptied out.

But remember that if Christ be not received, there is no other hope of salvation. And what is more, after this night, there may not even be another proclamation of the way of salvation for some of you. I do not know when I am more pained than when I have to go to visit young men who are dying, perhaps of consumption, and without hope.

It is dreadful work to try to set forth the Gospel to them. I sometimes feel as if I must proclaim the law, though they are so sick and weak. And sometimes, the mother stands beside the bed, and weeps, and says, “Ah, I have prayed for him many times, but oh, that I knew that he was saved!” Then she says to me, on the stairs, “I could give him up, sir, though I love the dear boy—I could give him up without a sigh, but oh, it breaks my heart to think that he is dying without a Savior!”

Yes, and every Christian ought to feel the same, in his measure, about every sinner. It is a trying thing to me, when I am walking in the street, to see an accident. I feel as if my heart were in my mouth at once. If I were in a railway accident and saw somebody killed, I do not think I would be able to hold

up my head for days. But oh, to know that some of you are losing your souls, and that you are every day getting nearer and nearer to your eternal doom. “Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die?”

I often wonder why some of you come to hear me as you do. It puzzles me, for I see no reason why you should do so. I offer you no amusement. I tell you no droll stories, but I seek to break your hearts with the hammer of the Word. You come and you go, yet you get no blessing so far as I can see. Are you content to have it so always?

If you are, I am not content. I am at least responsible for faithfully warning you and honestly preaching to you the great Gospel message, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Every time I stand in this pulpit, there is somebody here who never comes again—he cannot come again, for he dies before the next Lord’s-day.

So large is the congregation here that I may almost say, speaking according to the laws of probability, that it is almost certain that some one of us will have gone the way of all flesh ere this week is gone. Who will it be? May God take the ripe and spare the green! May He take those who are ready and let those be spared who are not ready. But better still, may He lead us all to trust in the Savior and then we shall all be ready whenever the summons shall come! May He do so, for His name’s sake! Amen.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.